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# **Southern Sensibilities: Advancing Third Wave Sociology of International Relations in the Case of Brazil**

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## **Abstract**

The sociology of International Relations (IR) around the world has evolved from an initial wave of critiques of its dominant American core towards a second wave of peripheral explorations that found IR to be disappointingly similar around the world. Advancing a more recent wave that stresses Southern sensibilities, hybridity and peripheral agency, this article calls for attention to the heterogeneities, positionality struggles and vernacularisations of sociological hierarchies in periphery IR. Taking Brazil as a case, it analyses peripheral IR as a field occupied by plural and competing positions on the question of how to engage with Northern theories and/or develop indigenous, Southern theories. The article shows how position-taking is structured by a rivalry among different schools of thought with their respective take on the import/indigenisation of IR theory—Brazilianising, Provincialising and Scientising IR—and how the hierarchy among seemingly recognisable debate positions is subverted when they travel to the periphery.

**Keywords:** Sociology of IR, Global IR, theory, core-periphery, Global South, Brazil, Rising Powers

## **Introduction: Three Waves in the Sociology of International Relations Around the World**

The reflexivist project of turning International Relations (IR) knowledge into an object of study has focused particularly on the geopolitics of knowledge.<sup>1</sup> The study of IR as a geopolitical world system structured by core-periphery patterns has undergone three waves. First wave, ‘critiques of the core’, argued that IR is a parochial, not-so-international discipline dominated by an American core that exports theories all over the world but ignores what goes on elsewhere (Hoffmann 1977; Holsti 1985; Smith 1987). Second wave, ‘peripheral explorations’, went beyond critiques of the core towards recovering alternative national and regional perspectives on IR, initially in the semi-peripheries of the Anglo-world and Europe (Wæver 1998; Crawford and Jarvis 2001; Friedrichs 2004; Jørgensen and Knudsen 2006) and later in peripheries beyond the West (Acharya and Buzan 2007; Tickner and Wæver 2009 and numerous single country studies). Based on these surveys, we now know that scholars around the world tend to copy ‘Western’ IR, that Westphalian state-centrism prevails over alternative ontologies, that there is ‘no non-Western IR theory’, and that theorising is even dreaded in most periphery countries at the expense of empirical and policy-relevant work.

The somewhat disappointing results of studies intended to dis/recover alternative non-Western thought has led to a third wave, ‘Southern sensibilities’, that explores the hybridities and strategic spaces of possibility for peripheral IR. From this latest wave we are learning that peripheral practices such as theory translation and application can play into local power struggles and thus be empowering in the peripheral field, that core theories may travel but never unproblematically or unaltered, that mimicry produces hybrid and thus original work that is ‘almost the same but not quite’—all directing our attention to peripheral agency and spaces of possibility

rather than passive, hegemonic acceptance (Bilgin 2008, 2016; Hamati-Ataya 2012; Tickner and Blaney 2012; Turton and Freire 2014). I use ‘Southern Sensibilities’ to refer to a sociology of IR that is theoretically attuned to the heterogeneity of peripheral fields, their positionality struggles and vernacularisations of sociological hierarchies and a methodological approach of proximity and engagement with the practice of peripheral IR-in-the-making.

The article proceeds as follows: first section outlines the theoretical and methodological tenets of a third wave sociology of IR. The second introduces Brazil as interesting case for advancing them. The third, empirical part analyses the three main schools of thought in Brazil and how they position themselves on the question of Western/Northern dominance in IR theory and whether to develop Southern theory.

### **Southern Sensibilities: Theoretical and Methodological Tenets**

First, the Southern Sensibilities wave stresses *peripheral heterogeneity*. Periphery IR is not as homogenous as the residual category ‘non-Western IR’ implies. IR in periphery countries should not be conceived as monolithic entities to be measured up against core IR and placed somewhere on a spectrum of integration-isolation, similarity-difference, Western-indigenous, copying-construction. Rather, the third wave sociology of IR analyses these as peripheral *fields* of IR, stressing the *polyphony and heterogeneity* within. IR is not only ‘quite different in different places’ (Wæver 1998:723), it is also quite different in the same place. These heterogeneities may play out, for example, over whether to engage with core IR, how, and what part of it. Different and competing schools of thought within the same periphery field may engage with, or distance themselves from, different parts of core IR—and it matters whether you engage ‘core IR’ via American, British, Scandinavian or French IR, whether you import post-positivist or positivist IR, an IR founded on history or political science, and so on. To bring out the plural strategies for navigating core-

periphery structures, this article draws on the ‘new sociology of ideas’ that moves closer to the local, contextual and micro-sociological dynamics of academic fields (Camic and Gross 2004). The sociology of science points to several sociological mechanisms that foster heterogeneous ‘schools of science’: a) although they are embedded within the same political and cultural context, variety in geographical location and societal insertion matters for the formation of distinctive approaches; b) control over material and organisational (employment and promotion) as well as symbolic resources (prestige and recognition) lends autonomy and allows schools to determine criteria for entry, quality and excellence; c) a steady inflow of students and lineages of teacher-mentor relations allow schools to be propagated through socialisation; d) as schools are rarely confined to their institutional base, access to, and preferably control over, a communication outlet and an association creates a space for intellectual conversation; e) while the above allows for interaction and integration *within* schools, competition is equally important: schools define their distinctiveness by positioning themselves in opposition to other schools (Collins 1998; Abbott 1999; Frickel and Gross 2005; Amsterdamska 2012).

This takes us to the second tenet, the centrality of *peripheral positionality struggles*: To recognise the existence of plural positions within peripheral fields is not to succumb to cacophony. Rather, the task for sociologies of peripheral IR is to identify the *structured rivalry*—what Randall Collins (1998) calls the ‘law of small numbers’—that drives the particular field. The idea is that limited attention space forces academics to always position themselves vis-à-vis each other. This opposition among contending schools of thought (usually three to six, Collins argues) gives structure to the field and drives intellectual innovation within it. Arguments about the construction, import or rejection of ‘theory’ should therefore always be read from a contextual viewpoint, i.e. as a ‘move in an argument’ (Skinner 2002). By making ‘moves in argument’, scholars position themselves against relevant rival persons, theories, schools, paradigms. Moreover, peripheral position-taking should be read contrapuntally; that is, simultaneously a move against rival positions

in the local periphery game *and* a move against the global core. Edward Said's contrapuntal method refers to a reading that emphasises the connectedness of 'texts from the metropolitan centre and from the peripheries' where various themes, particularly Western imperialism and non-Western resistance, 'play off one another, with only a provisional privilege being given to any particular one; yet in the resulting polyphony there is concert and order' (Said 1993:259, 51; Bilgin 2016). I deploy it here, however, as way of reading the same multivocality in texts produced by an encounter between periphery and core (in this case the interview). The argument instead being that the 'peripheral position-taking' of interviewees should not be read *univocally*, as either against the core or against another peripheral school, but *contrapuntally* as always both and that the two dimensions are connected.

Third, the *vernacularisation of sociological hierarchies*: the positions taken may be quite familiar ones 'mimicked' from the core, but their sociological relationship and the hierarchy among them is not as easily transposed. The travel of theories from core to periphery is an agent of change in itself due to variations in context (cf. Said 1983), in this case stemming from the particular historical trajectory of the field, its disciplinary delineations, status within the social sciences, theoretical and methodological traditions, connections to the policy sphere and broader social context. These variations mean that the *same* core IR theory can mean something 'quite different in different places' (Wæver 1998:723) and thus be 'almost the same but not quite' (Bilgin 2008:5). So when the 'peripheral explorations' wave encountered familiar theories that occupy a dominant position in the core, they have not necessarily translated into a dominant position in the periphery. The translation of recognisable debate positions (e.g. positivist/post-positivist, theoretical/empirical, idiographic/nomothetic, critical/mainstream)—from core to periphery entails a vernacularisation that can subvert conventional hierarchies among them.

In sum, the Southern sensibilities wave directs attention towards plural schools competing for position in fields whose hierarchical structures are not always as familiar as the positions. It

therefore calls for a methodological approach of *proximity* that brings us closer to these heterogeneous practices, positions and vernacularisations in peripheral fields (Bueger and Mireanu 2014). Methodologically, studies in the first and second wave tended to study both core and peripheral IR *at a distance*, e.g. through bibliometric investigations of journals or syllabi (Holsti 1985; Wæver 1998; Hagmann and Biersteker 2014; Kristensen 2015), surveys like TRIP (Maliniak, Peterson, and Tierney 2012) or methodologically eclectic tour d’horizons of peripheral institutions, publications, schools, persons and ideas (Jørgensen and Knudsen 2006; Acharya and Buzan 2007; Tickner and Wæver 2009). Surveys and bibliometric content analyses tend to take classifications and questions developed in the core as the standard against which peripheral fields are measured. This can be interesting enough for measuring the degree to which periphery IR is similar/different from core IR, on terms defined by the latter, but it remains oblivious to the potential hybridity of that sameness and construes difference as residuality. It is even less suited for studying attempts to construct indigenous theories. Here proximity is warranted as peripheral debates about whether to resist or complement ‘Northern’ or ‘Western’ theories and whether to develop ‘indigenous’ theories are ongoing, often not yet in print. It is necessary, therefore, to engage the constructive practices of IR knowledge-in-the-making through qualitative fieldwork. By moving closer to the local practices, moves and debates of intellectual life, the Southern Sensibilities wave can connect to recent programmatic calls for ‘turn to practice’ in the sociology of IR (Bueger 2012; Kessler and Guillaume 2012). Moving closer to the field raises a number of methodological issues in terms of delineating peripheral fields of IR, however, specifically what is ‘IR’ in Brazil?

### **Brazil as a Case of Peripheral IR**

This article takes IR in Brazil as a case to advance the Southern sensibilities wave and explore micro-sociological dynamics of peripheral agency. Brazil is an interesting case for multiple reasons.

Recent political turmoil and economic stagnation notwithstanding, Brazil is often considered one of the ‘emerging’ powers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Brazil is part of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) and IBSA (India, Brazil, South Africa) groups of ‘rising’ powers. It remains the predominant power in Latin America and has increased its political and economic weight in the region in recent decades, even on the global stage in the Lula era. Recent troubles may prove that Brazil, as a Brazilian proverb has it, is the land of the future and always will be, but even so the international thought of one of the largest would-be great powers is of interest to IR scholars more broadly, not just sociologists of the discipline.

In this light, it is striking how little attention has been devoted to Brazilian thought on international relations compared to rising powers like China and India. The sociology of IR has almost entirely neglected Brazil, usually treated it as part of Latin America in ‘IR around the world’ surveys (Tickner 2009; Tickner and Herz 2012; Tickner, Cepeda, and Bernal 2013). The negligence of Brazilian IR is even more puzzling considering that Brazilian scholars played a key role in developing dependency theory, which is often considered one of the few success stories where a distinctly Southern IR theory entered and gained recognition in core discourse (Tickner 2003:317–320; Acharya and Buzan 2007:308). It is not that there is no literature on Brazilian IR, but existing work is mostly published in Portuguese and consists largely of descriptive stock-takings of the history and institutional evolution of the discipline, its departments, teaching programs, curricula, teaching resources and job opportunities for students (Herz 2002; Miyamoto 2003; Lessa 2005; Vizontini 2005; Santos and Fonseca 2009; Faria 2012; Julião 2012; Ribeiro, Kato, and Rainer 2013; Vigevani, Thomáz, and Leite 2014). These studies rarely speak to the sociology of the ‘global’ discipline and the question of theorising beyond the Northern core—now commonly termed the ‘Global IR’ problematique (Acharya 2014). However, recent years have witnessed some studies moving in that direction (Jatoba 2013; Lima 2015; Barasuol and Silva 2016) and this article aims to further this trend by analysing Brazilian IR from a sociology of knowledge perspective. The



following analysis is based on fieldwork that engages 32 IR scholars in Brazil in conversations on the question of whether to import ‘Northern’ theories and/or develop indigenous, Southern theories.

In terms of delineating the field of ‘IR’ in Brazil, it is important for the Southern Sensibilities wave be open to the possibility that ‘IR’ can be delineated differently, not only in different countries, but also that these delineations can be subject to competition between different schools within the same country (cf. the Paulista vs. PUC and UnB definitions of IR below). The approach advocated here explores these differences in disciplinary constellations as part of the explanation why theorising debates look the way they do in a given field. Equally important for an approach that stresses *peripheral heterogeneity, positionality struggles and hierarchies* is to enter the field from different positions, both geographically and institutionally and in terms of gender, age, rank, prominence, educational background, schools of thought. Geographically and institutionally, the ‘sampling’ focused on IR scholars located in major cities (13 in Rio de Janeiro, 10 in São Paulo, 8 in Brasília, and one based in Santa Catarina interviewed at a conference) primarily because this reflects the geographical structure of the field as revealed in preliminary interviews. Within these three locations, however, the interviews had a comparable degree of institutional diversity with approximately half the interviewees based at the three top ‘institutes of international relations’ and the other half based at other institutions. The strategy aimed to bring out the heterogeneities and positionality struggles of the Brazilian field by studying what the major schools look like both from the inside and outside. Finally, the study included interviewees from different vertical positions (rank and prominence) in order to explore their, potentially different, views on power structures in the field: 11 full or retired professors, 6 associate professors, 9 adjunct professors, 3 assistant professors, 1 naval captain, 2 PhD students and informal conversations with undergraduate students. This sampling strategy also produced generational diversity. Overall, 32 scholars (21 male, 11 female) were interviewed in English from 2012-2013. Interviewees have been presented with the full transcript. Quotes have been anonymised and edited for clarity.

## **Schools of Thought in Brazil**

Three main schools of thought can be identified in Brazilian IR based on the theoretical and methodological criteria outlined above, the most important being that they are common devices for ‘position-taking’ and making ‘moves’ in Brazilian IR. Specifically, the scholars interviewed operate with a triangular geographical map of the most influential scholars (‘They are in Rio, they are in São Paulo, Brasília’), which they connect to distinct intellectual schools of thought: ‘So different kinds of centres have different kinds of traditions. Well, if you can say that. Brasília, I think, has a tradition of history, diplomatic history and at PUC [Rio] a tradition of postmodern, post-critical, constructivism...São Paulo I think would be more approximate to institutionalism or similar to political science, very institutional, more quantitative, more use of statistics, I guess.’ The linking of intellectual/theoretical and geographical/institutional schools means that intellectual debates often revolve into institutional competition. For example, one interviewee refused to discuss the main ‘theoretical debate’ in Brazilian IR because ‘instead of getting involved in a theoretical debate, we start to get involved in an institutional and an academic politics debate.’ Theoretical positions are ‘contaminated’ by an ‘institutional and power dispute’.

The three main institutions in this ‘power dispute’ are University of Brasília (UnB), Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio) and University of São Paulo (USP). The departments do not correspond completely to the schools of thought, both because the schools of thought are not limited to their institutional base but have followers outside, and because the institutions are not internally homogenous. However, school formation is reinforced by positioning practices that discipline internal Others (e.g. PUC scholars stigmatised as ‘un-PUC’ or UnB scholars labeled as ‘Americanised heads’) and by self-selection. As a scholar from USP states: ‘there is a selection, if you are empirical, quantitative, don’t say this to my friends, if you are

quantitative don't go there [PUC and UnB]. The same happens in USP. At USP, if you are Marxist it's pretty hard to get in at USP.' The field operates through a structured rivalry, and although these three schools are not exhaustive of IR in Brazil, they provide a useful illustration of the dynamics of peripheral agency outlined above: namely, that there is not one but multiple Brazilian strategies for engaging with core IR, with each school connecting to different parts of the core and distancing itself from others; that these stances vis-à-vis the core are deployed contrapuntally in peripheral struggles for position; and that sociological hierarchies between these positions take surprising forms when vernacularised.

Before analysing how these schools engage with Northern IR theories and/or construct indigenous theories, it is worth noting a more fundamental vernacularisation of the hierarchy between theoretical and empirical/policy-oriented work. Whereas 'IR theory' is the primary source of prominence in core IR (most top scholars are theorists), practical and policy-relevant expertise on Brazilian foreign policy has historically been the most important capital type for obtaining recognition in Brazil (Fonseca 1987; Tickner 2009; Tickner and Herz 2012). This is particularly so for generations trained in the 1970s and 1980s before IR was institutionalised as a separate discipline. The core that unified the field then was not a common disciplinary body of 'IR' knowledge, as most scholars held degrees in other disciplines, but the empirical subject of Brazilian foreign policy. Several first generation scholars interviewed still did not identify with 'IR', a Northern discipline, but with 'the persons that think about Brazilian foreign policy'. From the perspective of younger generations, too, IR theory remains mostly an imported and 'taught discipline', not something Brazilians specialise in for research ('nobody works on international relations theory, nobody researches that here...IR, theory of international relations is pretty much seen as a field you teach.'). The 2014 TRIP survey also shows that when asked to name 'most influential' *IR scholars*, Brazilian respondents tend to mention experts on Brazilian *foreign policy*

(first generation scholars like Lima, Vigevani, Cervo, Fiori, Vizentini, Hirst and later generations like Pinheiro, Spektor, Saraiva, Lessa, and Pecequillo):

[Table 1]

The survey thus points to a reversal of the theory-policy hierarchy. This is important for understanding why few scholars advocate indigenous ‘Brazilian theorising’ in what follows. The main opposition line on which Brazilian interviewees positioned themselves was not between different theoretical standpoints, but between theory and anti-theory: between those who advocate *engagement* with Northern IR theory (PUC and Paulista School) and those *distancing* themselves from Northern IR theory while advancing foreign policy *concepts* rooted in Brazil (Brasília School)—but very few actually proposed *Brazilian theory*.

The following three sections analyse in-depth how the three schools position themselves in practice. Each school is analysed with a focus on how proponents position themselves in relation to (1) core IR, (2) other Brazilian schools, and (3) how critics view the school—stressing throughout that position-taking on all three dimensions should be read contrapuntally.

### ***Brazilianising IR Through History, Concepts and Foreign Policy: The Brasília School***

The Brasília school positions itself as the strongest advocate of indigenous Brazilian IR, specifically the history and conceptualisation of Brazilian foreign policy as opposed to general theorising. It takes an anti-theoretical position, opposing both seemingly universal theories from the American core and theoretically inclined (i.e. Americanised) Brazilians. Instead, it hybridises one the most marginal parts of ‘core IR’, the French historiographical school of Renouvin and Duroselle, with the closest to an indigenous Brazilian tradition in IR, Latin American dependency theory. I call this

school ‘Brazilianising IR’ as its purpose is to make IR more Brazilian by developing *locally rooted concepts*.

Institutionally, the school is anchored at the University of Brasília’s Institute of International Relations, Brazil’s first IR department (est. 1974) (Fonseca 1987:273; Miyamoto 2003:105; Lessa 2005:5). In terms of societal insertion, its location in the capital and historically close connections to the foreign ministry with its scholar-diplomats has contributed to a relatively more foreign policy-oriented profile. Its delineation of ‘IR’ is multidisciplinary and takes the subject of *Brazilian foreign policy* as the unifying core of the field. The Brasília school developed out of history, rather than political science or bordering disciplines, and its proponents maintain that there is a distinct ‘Brazilian tradition’ in the ‘History of International Relations’ that analyses the historical development and insertion of peripheral countries (Lessa 2005:11; see also Santos 2005; and a critical view in Arend 2011). These scholars see their discipline as ‘History of IR’, in essence the diplomatic history of Brazil, not ‘IR’.

The Brasília School’s ‘History of IR’ approach is not an exclusively indigenous or Brazilian tradition, however. Intellectually, it is indebted to the French school of the ‘history of international relations associated with Pierre Renouvin and Jean-Baptiste Duroselle (Lessa 2005:3; Santos 2005:17–18; Saraiva 2009:33–35; Vigevani et al. 2014:9)—a postwar French school of thought that has been characterised by a stress on cultural specificity over universalist generalisation and coherent conceptualisations over positioning in a general theoretical debate (Wæver 1998:708–709). Proponents argue that the ‘Brazilian School of History of International Relations’ was imported from France by Amado Cervo, the founding figure of the Brasília School (Saraiva 2003:21–23). In terms of teacher-student lineages, the History of IR tradition has been propagated by Cervo, his students and students’ students, to whom Duroselle remains essential reading. In terms of institutionalisation, it is noteworthy that scholars in this tradition have edited the prominent journal *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional* since 1993.

Turning first to the Brasília School's position-taking relative to core IR, it is notable that its association with French 'History of IR', and partly the English School, is used to position it against North American 'theory of IR'. The link to these historical traditions explains why leading school figures do not advocate Brazilian *theorising*, but instead a move from universal theories towards historicity and locally 'rooted' concepts pertaining to Brazilian foreign policy (Cervo 2008). As a leading Brasília School scholar argues: 'The influence of the French school is very important in Brazil. And secondly the British School of the history of international relations...We never discussed theories of international relations. History of international relations is a field of research with a very strong density, with a strong density of concepts, methods and scientific knowledge, publications.' This scholar makes a common 'move in argument' by juxtaposing two fields—'theories of international relations' and 'history of international relations'—placing the Brasília School in the latter as a narrative-conceptual and historiographical approach for analysing Brazilian foreign policy, rather than as 'theorist' (see also Santos 2005:19; Saraiva 2009:30). Notice how the same scholar replies when asked how he teaches IR theory:

No, I never teach this discipline. We call the discipline where I am professor Brazilian foreign policy, Brazil's international relations, Latin American relations and this kind of discipline, not theories. I *never*, I *never* accepted, should accept to give this...Of course we must know these theories, we must know them I say to my students, to my colleagues. It is very important to know theories of International Relations, at least to know how to defend ourselves from them [laughing]

[laughing]

Hegemonic stability, what is that? Choque de civilizações...Theories of International Relations are Anglo-Saxonic. Nothing more. Where is the theory? They are Anglo-Saxonic. They are instruments, very powerful instruments of international politics, an international way to see the world, a cosmovision. Everything is Anglo-American and this exerts an influence, a very big influence in our courses of International Relations in Brazil, in Latin America. Then I decided to confront. Confront.

This move both *sociologises* theory as embedded in society ('theories are products of society, of the society where these theories are built. You know. They are not convenient for us.') and *politicises* by representing theories as Americo-centric tools for hegemonic control that have no analytical value and must be learned for defensive purposes only ('theory of hegemonic stability is good for the United States'). Other Brasília School scholars concur, these 'macro-theories of (supposed) universal scope' (Bernal-Meza 2010:201) must be confronted by exposing how 'old and arrogant' IR theories, ranging from realism to post-modernism, 'are useful to the national strategic apparatus' of the US and reflect its 'desires and wants', but 'function to those outside the system, especially to peripheral capitalist countries, as hegemonic accommodation theories.' (Saraiva 2009:20–24).

The move against Anglo-Saxonic theories, including their influence *within* Brazil, is used to open a space for developing *concepts* for Brazilian foreign policy, Latin America and emerging countries: 'Theories are prejudiced for Brazilian thought, for the Brazilian way of studying international relations, Brazilian way of explaining international relations. Because we have concepts, all of them make a theory of international relations. And I would like to see for instance Argentinian concepts, Chinese concepts, Indian concepts, and others, South Africa. And this would be another way to build theories on international relations and if we could make relations with all this kind of thinking and studies of international relations from these emerging countries, then we would have another theory of international relations that is not an Anglo-Saxonic theory of international relations.' Several scholars of Brazilian foreign policy, including some located outside Brasília, are sympathetic to the project of developing indigenous concepts for Brazil and emerging powers ('it's curious that we work with the theories that are developed mainly in the US, US and UK, I guess...why are you going to leave all the discussion for emerging powers to be done in the North if we are the emerging powers? Why not, why don't we think about ourselves?'). The North/South dichotomy is deployed to open a space to 'think about ourselves' in the South, to develop concepts that are useful to us and countries like us in the South, not to them in the North.

These moves rely on a fundamental notion that the purpose of knowledge—theoretical and otherwise—is to guide political action. As a Brasília School proponent explains, ‘all theory is conselheira. Theoreticians are conselheiros do Principe [laughing] Conselheiros. They want to say to the dirigente, to the statesman, how to decide, what to decide, how to decide. Of course.’ The school’s Brazilianising project is thus driven by a rather Machiavellian meta-theory in which all theories and concepts are always for someone: the Prince. If American IR serves the American government, so Brazilian IR should serve its government. In line with what has been called the ‘Brazilian way’ of producing knowledge in service of power (Fonseca 1987), the Brazilianising IR project is not to develop universal theories to cloak Brazil’s particular interests, but to recognise that no ideas are universal. *Concepts* are therefore proposed as a more frankly ethnocentric mode of knowledge that admits its embeddedness in a national setting and its obligation to the Prince.

A key source for specifically Brazilian concepts that differ from Northern IR comes from Latin American thought, particularly the dependency thinking associated with the Economic Commission on Latin America (CEPAL). One proponent contends that CEPAL’s conceptualisation of core-periphery structures in the global capitalist economy provide ‘the roots of the Escola de Brasília’:

[CEPAL] were good to found a strong thinking in international relations, relations between South, developing, and North, developed. This relation is a structural relation and there are a lot of concepts that came from this first experience...they thought that developed countries *need* the world underdeveloped. They were complementary things. The developing countries were important in this. It is important for the developed countries to maintain these structural differences in the international economy. And this is the most important goal for Latin America, to cut with these structures...CEPAL gave us for the academy, the principal, most important preoccupation: development. For the governments, for the states, the principal preoccupation is development. And this comes from CEPAL. For the countries that are developed this is not the preoccupation, nothing, they have nothing to think about. This we have to think about, not them, because for them it is good this structural inequality in the world. For us, no. That’s not



our national interest. And then a lot of concepts. For instance, this development. Another, autonomia this is another...Autonomia means each country, in this case developing countries like Brazil and emerging countries, must have autonomy in decision-making in the international field because without this autonomy you can't do anything, anything coherent with the interest of this country or that country. Autonomia is another concept, another condition. Autonomia. We have a lot of other concepts that are key concepts of this kind of thinking that Bernal-Meza calls Escola de Brasília.

This move against 'core IR' relies on a North/South worlding where difference is constituted by level of 'development' and 'autonomy' rather than, say, culture: 'We' in the South have to think about concepts like development and autonomy, not 'them' the developed in the North. The distinctiveness of the Brasília School, apart from its focus on Brazilian foreign policy concepts, is the emphasis on international political economy and development rather than, say, international security.

Turning to its positionality within Brazilian IR, the distinctiveness of the Brasília School's developmentalist stance is not only construed in opposition to North American IR, but also contrapuntally against liberal, Americanised scholars *within* the peripheral field. Even UnB has 'American cabeças' who import seemingly universal theories from the North, one scholar argues: 'Here in this institute we have American cabeças, Americanised thought, you know. People, professors, teachers here that think all that American scholars and American dirigentes think and do is correct and we should think and do the same thing...professor Viola, in some measure Antonio Jorge Ramalho, Paulo Roberto de Almeida'. This move against domestic counterpoints is also made by another first generation scholar outside Brasília who associates himself with the nationalist-developmental camp of the Brasília School ('It's the same team', 'Nationalist group'): 'The academic studies in Brazil is completely dominated by American theories' and 'they think with the American heads'. Within the hierarchies of the Brazilian field, the Brasília School, given its historical role in institutionalising IR as French-inspired historiography of Brazilian foreign policy,

finds itself in a defensive and conservative position vis-à-vis Americanised, typically younger, scholars. Another Brasília scholar exemplifies the defensive stance, ‘it is very hard to convince young students...to go and try Duroselle and try, I don’t know, the French people...so I always encourage my students to do historical analysis.’ From the perspective of first generation scholars, the young generation’s reliance on the Northern mainstream decreases the likelihood of constructing indigenous, Brazilian or Southern concepts:

No, I don’t know if this is going to happen. I mean, I think now we are much more, the discipline in Brazil is much more within the mainstream. But who knows?

*And the critical part of the mainstream also?*

Yeah, of course.

*Because you count postmodernism and critical theory as part of the mainstream?*

Yeah, well, mainstream from our standpoint. But no, our young scholars are in all places in the mainstream, critical theory is also mainstream no? I don’t know. From the North-South perspective, it’s mainstream.

To this first generation scholar of Brazilian foreign policy, what is ‘mainstream’ or not is viewed from a ‘North-South’ standpoint. Young scholars, especially those associated with the PUC school, have become so integrated in the ‘Northern mainstream’, including its critical part, that a distinct Brazilian contribution is unlikely. The opposition against ‘American heads’, i.e. theory-trained scholars, is also felt by internal others. A young theory-oriented scholar recalls upon arriving at UnB that ‘he [Cervo] thought that I was, like I had heard here, not only one time, that I was the one who helps to diffuse the American theory.’ Other younger scholars experience a similar resistance to their engagement with IR theory.

Finally, critiques are illustrative of the school’s positionality in the peripheral field. Typical critiques are that the ‘Brasília school’ label is strategic self-promotion without any content and that whatever content remains is parochial, nationalistic and policy-centric. For example, a UnB

professor who identifies with 'IR theories' ranging from liberalism to realism and constructivism is reluctant to discuss, and thus lend credence to, the so-called 'Brasília School' but nevertheless positions himself against it:

I would say the only institutionalised group you have, the one Cervo is leading, they will talk about the Latin American school of international relations, not about a global South school of international relations.

*And they would talk, Cervo talks about conceitos brasileiros.*

Yeah, yeah, I don't agree with it at all.

*Oh, you don't think this is*

No, no, I think concepts are theoretical, universal, they are not national concepts, OK. [Cervo's] idea that you can produce a theory that is based in geography, in regional geography is very different from what I think. I think theory is universal.

The opposition line here is a typical one between epistemological universalism and nationalism: The school is not criticised for its empirical focus on Brazil, but the epistemological parochialism of its project of constructing national concepts rooted in Brazil, and serving Brazilian foreign policy, rather than generally applicable theories. Even scholars sympathetic to the project of developing concepts based on Brazilian foreign policy experiences criticise the school for being nationalist: 'No, not Brazilian, I think we should try to develop concepts that are appropriate to situations or countries as Brazil, but not *Brazilian* concepts...I don't like the idea of Brazilian concepts, I am completely against that. I think it's very nationalist. There's no Brazilian concept.' Critics also reject the school for being too nationalist in terms of intellectual reach, i.e. lacking global engagement: 'they don't pretend to have a global influence, that is, a school for the world. They pretend to be for Brazil and South America or Latin America...My argument is that there is not enough dissemination of their approach all over the country beyond the University of Brasília and their disciples, their direct students. OK. That not enough consider this a school of international

relations, this is a group within a department.’ Another scholar considers the school’s emphasis on national, cultural and geographical embeddedness counterproductive for creating a more global IR:

I think that Cervo and this group, at the same time that they refuse the value of International Relations theory as some kind of Western, I don’t know, dominant hegemonic thought. They refuse this, and they believe that they can put something better in its place. I think that in the case of Cervo, he is defending putting concepts [that] are rooted in our historical experiences so they reflect our cultures and things like that. Well, I know that there is a lot of divergence on what theory is. But at the same time this position sounds a little strange because it doesn’t favor the dialogue or the interlocution between scholars and in the end it threatens the possibility of a global field or at least, global is not a very precise metaphor, but OK we can understand each other. So I believe that we could exchange views, exchange arguments, exchange working hypotheses, whatever many names we can give it, but I believe that we can exchange thoughts in general and I don’t believe that each region or country, and why countries? Why countries? He takes this for granted. And I believe that we should dialogue more and that this perspective doesn’t reach the dialogue.

This critical move exemplifies how the school is opposed for its isolationism and arbitrary national boundary drawings. The same scholar goes on to make a related move against the school’s elitism and policy-centrism: ‘when Amado Cervo, whom I respect and I adore him, but I completely disagree with him when he talks about the constructors of concepts. I don’t know who will construct our concepts? Ah, the same old diplomats’. This critique is not aimed at the project of developing alternative concepts *per se* but the centrality of policymakers in it. Scholars outside Brasília, in particular, view the Brasília School as ‘very linked with the government’ and in some cases as reproducing government discourse. Links to the government represents a double-edged sword that confers authority in a field traditionally prone to foreign policy analysis, yet opens for critiques that the school is ideological and unacademic. One such critique comes from the PUC school.

### ***Provincialising IR through Theory and Anti-Eurocentrism: the PUC School***

This school engages core IR theory, mainly its critical, post-positivist and European varieties, but simultaneously critiques the use of Eurocentric mainstream IR in both core and periphery. Its critical engagement with theories from the North is used to position itself as the most sophisticated theoretical school and to represent the historiographical, anti-theoretical and conceptual-nationalist strategy of the Brasília School and other foreign policy analysts as theoretically backward. I refer to this strategy as ‘Provincialising IR’ because it engages Northern IR with an acute awareness of its provincialism, aiming to put it in its right place rather than to reject and replace it with something Brazilian.

The school is institutionally centred on PUC-Rio, the second IR institution to be established in Brazil. PUC-Rio is widely considered the second ‘pole’ of IR in Brazil and controls the other main IR journal *Contexto Internacional* (Lessa 2006:14; Santos and Fonseca 2009:361; Jatoba 2013:39). The intellectual environment surrounding PUC-Rio draws different boundaries around the field: it advocates ‘IR’ as a discipline *per se* whose boundaries are defined by ‘IR theory’ rather than ‘Brazilian foreign policy’ or ‘history of IR’ (Lessa 2006:15; Ventura and Lins 2014:120). The Brazilian field has historically engaged little with the great theoretical debates in Euro-American IR, as one PUC professor laments, and the majority of research has been historical studies of Brazilian foreign policy, at least until the 1990s when postmodernism, constructivism and critical theory and other Euro-American approaches gained some influence (Herz 2002). PUC scholars posit their school as the exception that does engage with state-of-the-art theoretical debates in Euro-American IR, especially post-positivist varieties.

Looking first at its relation to core IR, the PUC school is in an ambivalent position: it engages with critical theories from the Euro-American core but is also critical of Eurocentrism. PUC scholars navigate this ambivalence in various ways. The balancing act is evident in the interaction with a senior PUC professor who finishes my sentence when talking about the distinctiveness of PUC:

*But as far as I could understand from some of the others I have talked to, PUC Rio is sort of an institution where, I mean, where*

Theory is very important

*Where theory is important and which is quite critical compared to some of the other institutions?*

Yeah, yeah, well, you know Rob Walker and Nicholas Onuf are members of the staff and we are very much influenced by their views. I am not embarrassed at all of being influenced by their views. Stefano Guzzini and Anna Leander have visited us also...And Jens Bartelson has also influenced us. So it's true but I don't know, do you wanna call them Western scholars, they are Western scholars in terms of sociology of knowledge, let's say. But, you know...my perspective is that I wanna know what people can say about relations of domination and alternatives to these relations of domination. I don't care if they come from the West or the East or the moon. So this idea that the geographical insertion is what matters, I don't buy it.

This move relies on a de-territorialised 'we' consisting of critical and theory-oriented scholars who think about 'domination and alternatives'. The main distinction here is not between Northern and Southern IR, but between critical and uncritical IR. The spontaneous defence against the 'geographical insertion' argument should be read both in light of the interview setting and critiques of PUC as importers of imperialist theories, obsessed with 'mainstream' Euro-American theories and detached from questions of relevance to Brazil (see below). Other PUC scholars defend their engagement with, for example, post-structuralism by arguing that it opened a peripheral space for criticising Euro-centrism both within and outside Brazil, its Northern origins notwithstanding:

*But what do you think about this debate about whether existing theories are Eurocentric?*

They are all Eurocentric.

*But is it something people are discussing here? You said people at PUC*

Yeah, at PUC we are all aware of that, that's why we read Foucault and other poststructuralists. We know that. And that's why we had Inayatullah, the guy was here and taught a course here in international political economy from this different perspective. The Westphalian deferral, the notion that they had, we

study that in the graduate courses. It's not really common in other places. So we have this feeling that we know, we know that IR theory, here at PUC, we know that IR theory is Eurocentric.

Note how the argument that 'IR theory is Eurocentric' is not solely a move against Eurocentric theories from the core, it works contrapuntally as a move in the peripheral field: Only 'we' at PUC realise this Eurocentrism because 'we read Foucault and other poststructuralists'. The association with critical theory from the core is deployed against the counterpoint of Brazilian scholars who uncritically accept Eurocentric theories and are unable to come up with alternative theorisations: 'not the Brazilian scholars because they are really committed to a certain Western way of thinking...Scholars that are trained in Western universities, they cannot see that because they are blinded because of the theoretical lenses that they have. So if it happens for you to be in a place that is one of the focal points for others to look at to understand these changes. And if it happens for you to have the necessary theoretical training to understand change, then it's good. For me, it's clear.' The diagnosis has similarities with that of the Brasília School (Brazilian scholars think with 'American heads') but the treatment differs: in the provincialising project of the PUC school, the solution is to obtain the 'necessary theoretical training' by engaging with critical core scholarship. One can therefore hear 'Rob' (R.B.J. Walker) invoked to make moves against *both* Westernised Brazilians and Eurocentric universalism ('Rob keeps talking about the impossibility of choosing between the particular and the universal.').

Second, having showed that the PUC school's relationship to core IR cannot be detached from its positioning against counterpoints in the peripheral field, let us turn more directly to the latter. In interviews with PUC scholars, their engagement with theory is represented as a more progressive stage of IR whereas the rest of Brazilian IR remains atheoretical, historical, empirical and backward. One interviewee represents the field as fragmented into fiefdoms:

It's like the medieval era somehow.

*So there is not one discipline in a sense?*

Yeah, I wouldn't say that there is one discipline of IR in Brazil because people learn different things in different regions. And here we can go up to the latest book in IR theory, and there they are gonna quit learning at the neo-neo debate at the graduate program, not talking about undergraduate. In southern Brazil, a friend of mine who was a professor of IR theory he would go up to the neo-neo and then he would quit and give the Social Theory of International Relations for students, 'OK, now you read that, that's bullshit, but that's constructivism.' See how it works?

*Yeah, yeah, it's pretty crazy.*

Yeah, it's bad, I feel sorry for them. It's bad, it happens and you've gotta deal with this kind of people. If you have a good training in IR theory you know that there are many more things involved, talking about normative agenda and talking about post-positivism, talking about how our choices matter.

The medieval metaphor is deployed both spatially (feudalism) and temporally (backwardness): Different institutions have unique features, but, in this PUC move, the rest of Brazilian IR is not only different, it is *theoretically backward*. The PUC school is represented as more pluralistic and critical than 'other places', as one scholar argues: even though one colleague 'says things that are really out of place [we] are a department that is really open in terms of theoretical orientations, we are open, we accept him...in terms of the range of issues, research topics that are being studied nowadays, it's really huge and the theoretical perspectives, you know, people here are critical...we transform critical studies and mainstream here, so it is really really easy to see students talking about Foucault, talking about Derrida and trying to apply that to their studies, which is not common in other places.' 'Other places' do not get beyond applying universal theories, towards critiquing and provincialising IR. For example, the same scholar criticises an 'ultraliberal' scholar to whom 'everything is about universal principles of everything. And he doesn't realise that these universal principles are not universal, they are Eurocentric and they just reproduce inequality of an order that is ruled by America. You know, he doesn't get to that point.' Among 'other places' in the field, the distinctiveness of the post-positivist PUC position is primarily produced in opposition to the history



of foreign policy approach (Brasília School) and mainstream political science approach (Paulista School). Consider how a senior PUC professor represents the field: ‘what I see is people working with foreign policy analysis, working with you know all the Western theories and models and specifically political science institutionalist models.’ Another PUC scholar posits its distinctiveness in opposition to ‘totally policy oriented’ Brasília scholars who ‘don’t think critically’:

[T]he way they do history, they talk to diplomats, they go to documents and they write what they think is the interpretation about that.

*And you think there is a different approach here or you have a different approach maybe?*

No, here I guess we are more trained to understand that there is something called ontology, another thing called epistemology and another one called methodology and they are interrelated. And that they are all moral choices. There is a normative commitment...sometimes you gotta think about ontology and talk about ontology in terms of normative agenda, not in terms of a positivistic feeling that somehow reality is gonna appear in front of you and you are gonna do science. What I see there in Brasília is that they have, I mean not all of them, but many of those guys they do not have this perspective that theory creates the conditions for them to see something in the empirical realm. And here we are really aware of that.

‘We’ are theoretical and critical, ‘they’ are positivist and policy-oriented. In a temporal move, the Brasília School is criticised for being lost in 1970s French historiography (‘That’s 70s. A structuralist perspective on history’) and not engaging with the global state-of-the-art: ‘Because they learned that I guess they keep reproducing that. They think it’s an alternative to the American way...But do they know anything about America and the way they produce knowledge and the schools of thought there? No, yeah, they have no contact with that.’ In a similar temporal move, another PUC scholar likens Brazilian foreign policy approaches to 19<sup>th</sup> century diplomatic history: ‘the foreign policy analysis tradition in Brazil is extremely descriptive and historical. It’s not particularly analytical, you read this literature it’s like you’re in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.’

The PUC scholars interviewed explicitly oppose the Brasília School's call for constructing Brazilian concepts based on foreign policy experiences. One rejects the Brazilianisation strategy, including the Brasília School label, as a defensive position taken by nationalist scholars whose only originality is their Brazilianness: 'I don't know why they need to create this label because I cannot see that distinguishes them from other guys in other places. Maybe because they are studying Brazil and the Brasília school would be like this Brazilian label, I don't know...I do not identify myself as someone that needs to talk about my country to say something interesting about critical studies...Maybe because I do have this IR training and I am able to talk to those guys, Rob Walker, Mike Shapiro, Mupiddi and others. OK? If you don't have this training and you wanna identify with something, it is good for you to talk about your country and say 'hey, we have an IR theory from Brazil'. But it's empty in terms of the content.' Those advocating a 'Brazilian way' are dismissed for reproducing policy discourse and being unaware of 'what theory is'.

Third, turning to critiques, these generally concern the fact that the school's critical and post-positivist orientation is imported from the North and not particularly Brazilian or relevant to Brazilian concerns. A young scholar notes the paradox that 'everyone there is postmodernist' and 'everyone is using like post-structuralism, post, eh, post-post-post-post-everything' to critique Euro-centrism and open for indigenous perspectives, identities and discourses, but not trying to construct Brazilian theories:

[E]verybody is using Rob Walker and Buzan and Wæver, so it's becoming quite famous and it's a bit weird because on the one hand people are arguing that all the theories are coming from outside, it's supposed to be a tool to dominate us, but on the other hand everybody is using Copenhagen [School]...it's bizarre because people are not actually trying to create some theory, people are using the tools that the Global North are supposed to create, so somehow we are trying to be Brazilian using foreign tools...We are not trying to create a Brazilian theoretical tool to understand this. We are definitely using Bourdieu and Foucault and Nye's soft power, you know. People are not trying to create a Brazilian, definitely not.

As this move illustrates, the PUC school may itself be *intellectually* critical of Euro-centrism but is nonetheless subject to periphery critiques for being a *socially* Northernised position, by associating with Northern academics and importing their thoughts. As professors from other Rio institutions put it, ‘the researchers of PUC, they tend to be the American university in Brazil’, are ‘very comfortable with the Anglo-American thing’ and aim to be ‘different from IR in the rest of the country’ by inserting themselves into the core: ‘They are outside and they want to be in, they hunger for that. One thing that really for me, it’s really funny, is the International Studies Association, whenever the call for papers come up, they go crazy. Because for them ‘that’s the meeting I absolutely have to go to even if I have to sell my apartment to pay for my trip [laughing] and I have to send lots of proposals because I cannot afford to not be accepted.’ The students go crazy...you sell your dog, your car and then you go.’ To critics, the eagerness to socialise with core scholars combined with theoretical purism results in an exclusivist position: ‘you can’t discuss Walker here in Brazil with someone from PUC because he is giving classes there. So if you say, ‘oh, maybe Walker is thinking about’ ‘No, no, no, no, and I was having coffee with him yesterday’’. Another interviewee notes that the theoretical purism (‘I think they are a little bit paranoid about knowing *the* theory’) excludes outsiders as well as ‘un-PUC’ insiders:

One thing that happens in PUC is also, I am just stating a fact, it’s not that I am critical, but some faculty members exercise like a celebrity status towards students and only because this person is now doing research on, I don’t know, poststructuralist whatever, he/she is able to influence a whole bunch of students at the bottom, like undergraduate, graduate. It’s like ‘OK, they are big stars’. There is a fascination, and I know a girl there, she just got her PhD and her theoretical orientation is very un-PUC.

*Un-PUC?*

And she says it that she feels it.

Viewed from the outside, PUC is not distinguished by being temporally ‘ahead’ but its desire to associate with core celebrity scholars and personality cults. A Brasília School scholar depicts the

PUC school's fascination with famous IR theorists as a 'core' and 'mainstream' orientation: 'the main difference between us and them is that we are, how can I say, much less impacted by the debate of the mainstream and constrained by this idea of belonging or following strictly, you know, some core group or some fame, no? I think people are much more ecumenical, OK? So theory was not a very important question, issue in our centre, you know. This is a very important issue for the people from PUC-Rio, OK?' Critics thus see PUC-Rio as globally integrated and 'mainstream', but this does not translate into influence *within* Brazil. Quite the contrary, another scholar maintains: 'My colleagues at PUC-Rio, I think they have created the centre in Brazil, which is at PUC-Rio, which is very much linked to this IR community around ISA and the main people, the most influential ones [but] I think they are not influential in Brazil.' This points to a trade-off in the strategy of provincialising IR via Northern theories: PUC's engagement with core IR and its (critical) theory debates means that critics view it as less influential in Brazilian foreign policy debates.

### ***Scientising IR through American Political Science: The Paulista School***

The Paulista school, associated with the University of São Paulo, engages with American positivist IR and opposes the dominance of post-positivist European IR. This position can be summarised as 'Scientising IR' as it aspires to make Brazilian IR scientific and universal modelled on American political science. It imports this vision for IR, as a subdiscipline to political science, from the mainstream of the American core. Note that IR in Brazil was not born as a political science subdiscipline nor did the American political science approach ever attract many followers (Herz 2002:15; Santos and Fonseca 2009:354; Jatoba 2013:37–38). The Paulista School is therefore the newcomer in Brazil and its proponents posit themselves as challengers to the two orthodox approaches. The Paulista school is also more liberal and institutionalist than the two former schools, but its main distinctiveness is methodological and meta-theoretical. In contrast to PUC and Brasília,

it views theory as universal not only across space-time but across disciplines: IR should be integrated with political science under a social science umbrella unified by rational choice.

As for its position vis-à-vis the core, the Paulista school aims to connect to the mainstream of the American core in order to counterbalance what is seen as excessive European influence within the peripheral field. One of the USP scholars who ‘started this movement’ portrays the liberal and institutionalist ‘American approach’ as marginal, and therefore novel, in Brazil compared to the old European ‘Marxist approach, French approach, Foucault, Bourdieu’:

So we used to be more Europe-oriented and right now it’s changing to the US and the approach has changed a little bit. You know what, until USP[’s IR department] was created, there used be not any institution with an American approach in International Relations. It’s very new, it’s very new. They have prejudice about US production because it’s more liberal, much more institutionalist, more liberal and so on. And now it’s changed a little bit because of the influence of economics, of political science in International Relations studies and then with the influence of US, so this has changed a little bit, more empirical, more quantitative...because their prejudice was huge, was big, you know, nowadays it’s not so much. People are changing their perspective and then are training to use quantitative methods like what happened in political science and economics. But it’s very new, very very new. Four years ago. It is very new. It used to be Europe, it used to be Marxist approach, French approach, Foucault, Bourdieu in international relations. Right now, it’s American.

The conventional core hierarchy between dominant liberal-positivist-quantitative and dissident critical-Marxist-’post’ positions is reversed in the peripheral field: ‘The dominance is more neo-Marxist. And liberal approaches, few places do research in this perspective. That’s why USP is not leading, a leader in the debate, it’s because it’s new but also because it’s not a hegemonic position.’ This reversal of sociological hierarchies makes it possible to use American quantitative approaches as a position-taking tool for dissidents, with the rhetorical advantages this position entails: being an outlier, marginalised for challenging status quo, but doing so for a greater good. To exemplify, the introduction of ‘quantitative, experimental studies’ was not well-received by Brazilians, according

to this US-returned scholar who finds himself ‘on the American side, on the quantitative side’: ‘I am not a good guy there. I am an outlier in terms of International Relations...because I thought that you need to have a different approach, not only European approach, you need to have a training like Americans. So in order to publish in the US also, not only Europe. So you need to have the skills on quantitative technique, so sometimes I do not have a good image with my colleague because of that ‘You are Americanising our International Relations, you are not a good guy’. Anyway, no problem.’ From the Paulista perspective, a Euro-American divide over methodology, not that between universalism-nationalism or theory-policy, constitutes the main divide in Brazilian IR. A young USP graduate now based in another São Paulo institution exemplifies:

There is some divide on methods, different methods. For example, the sociological approach is more like European for example, people who like to discuss with European scholars, Foucault, Bourdieu, etcetera. And some people are more Americanised so they want to build formal models and statistics. The problem is that there are very few people doing good research on both. In IR in Brazil. But there is still a debate and it’s a funny debate...and you know, people tend to undervalue other people’s work if they are not doing the same work that you are doing. That’s too bad for science but that’s reality everywhere...But right now I am writing a paper, this paper, as you can see we have a lot of tables.

*Lot of regressions.*

A lot of regressions, some very fancy models and that’s what I am doing now.

This move translates a divide between European sociological and qualitative methods versus American formal modelling and statistics into the Brazilian field. Subscribing to the latter, historically marginal position in Brazilian IR, this scholar attempts to translate its influence in the core into the peripheral field. This is done by representing the divide between European and American style IR in Brazil as more than institutional, but also generational and meritocratic: ‘if you are a terrible scholar but you have very good personal connections, you can be quite successful. But even in Brazil the world is changing so we are becoming more meritocratic. And for the new

generation, they realise that, sometimes they are convinced that they have to study formal models and statistics. They know if they don't do that, they won't publish in top journals in political science...Like American Political Science Review, it's very hard to publish a qualitative piece there. So there are many people like that. They say 'well, I have to study statistics or formal models or both, so I can be a successful professional academic''. As Brazilian IR becomes more meritocratic, this Paulista scholar argues, it will become more American and quantitative. Another USP scholar sees Americanisation as a product of Brazil's emergence and therefore believes IR will become less Southern in the future:

[We] really tried to get a singular theory about the South-South or Brazilian perspective on our place in the world in '60s and '70s. But now, given the fact that we are an emerging power, we are trying to copy the centre's International Relations views. So it's opposite, when you saw yourself as a singular position, as a periphery, you said you needed to have a specific International Relations view. But now we are just like others, so you don't need a specific or singular theory. The theory fits on our perspective. Of course, there is a split on this in Brazil. Some guys, for instance, I don't know if you met some guys from PUC-Rio...João Nogueira is a professor at PUC-Rio, the guy is here and he has a different view because he thinks that Brazil should have a different perspective given the fact that we are an emerging power, emerging market. But what I see for instance in my department is that you come closer to US perspectives.

This move against Southern and indigenous theorisations is rooted in the view that real-world events (i.r.) drive theorisations (IR): Brazil's 'emergence' in i.r. will make its IR more integrated, developed, and like the 'centre' and less distinctive, indigenous, peripheral and Southern. There is no need for alternative Southern theories if Brazil is 'just like others', this scholar contends, Brazilians should rather start learning American approaches. Although he recognises that there is a 'split' on this: 'there is some big debate on things like that, whether you should import theoretical approaches from central countries or we should develop ourselves. I think there is some debate in the academy about that. The problem is when you ask what this theory could be [they reply] 'I don't

know’.’ This theoretical ‘split’ is related to a political debate between those, mostly on the right, advocating closer relationships with the US and Europe and those, mostly on the left, advocating greater South-South cooperation: ‘there are two sort of groups in Brazil: One is developmentalist that thinks Brazil needs to be more closed and have more relationships with South America and South-South relations in order to balance the power of the US and Europe. And the other group thinks that you need to be more integrated economically and more linked with the US and Europe.’ In this debate, the Paulista position is defined in opposition to Brazilian concepts (Brasília) and critical/postcolonial perspectives (PUC)—both of which sympathise with peripheral, Southern perspectives.

Finally, critics view the Paulista school as a newcomer in Brazilian IR, yet a potentially dangerous one bidding for rational choice hegemony. A scholar from PUC-São Paulo contrasts their department’s pluralism to the mathematical rational choice of USP: ‘In our program, well, first of all it’s diversity. We don’t do at all rational choice and there is no GRE to get in. That’s it. Maybe the difference with other programs here in São Paulo particularly...at USP they do GRE for the PhD entrance.’ This scholar continues to represent rational choicers as one of the only ‘schools of thought’ in Brazilian IR: ‘There are no schools of thought in IR apart from those close to rational choice and very close to political science, which, actually, some of them even question if IR is a discipline. Those ones are close to political science, although they might have IR departments and courses, sometimes they do question IR as a discipline.’ Opposition to the Paulista School thus relates to the *disciplinarity debate*. This debate has produced two ‘opposing groups’ in Brazilian IR, according to a PUC scholar, the Paulista School versus an alliance among the two orthodox schools: ‘guys from São Paulo, USP, they are opposed to guys from Brasília and PUC here. So there is an alliance between UnB and PUC here and the other guys that are the newcomers that, and I tell you that, I am serious, they don’t know anything about IR but they come from political science and they have no room in political science and now they are coming to IR and they are trying to take control



of it. They are those guys that accept like modernisation theory, for instance, to understand IR. That's why people here get involved against the colonisation of IR by political science.' The Paulista newcomers do not have an established history, a UnB professor asserts, 'They have nothing! They never saw the international field, they were so USPianos. As you know, this intellectual community is interesting, they think they are enough for all of Brazil, you know. They think Brazil that's enough. They were never interested. Nowadays they created a doctorate and master from nothing! They had no tradition, no teachers, no research, no publications.'

Playing into a broader narrative about Paulista dominance in Brazilian society, the school is criticised as a self-sufficient 'coloniser' with no IR tradition. This final example illustrates both the existence of heterogeneous positions when it comes 'what is IR' in the peripheral field but also that some are more compatible than others: the Brasília and PUC schools diverge on important points but their visions of the discipline (history of IR and theory of IR) are *ceteris paribus* more compatible with each other than the Paulista vision (IR subsumed under political science) which represents a threat to the very identity of the field. Moreover, the Brasília and PUC projects are also related: to overcome Eurocentrism, patterns of domination, and open towards alternative Southern perspectives on world politics. The main disagreement is on how to achieve this: by nationalising concepts or engaging with critical postcolonial theories from the North. The Paulista project of scientising IR, by contrast, leaves little room for indigenous or Southern perspectives. All this explains why the Paulista school has provoked a counterbalancing alliance among the two 'status quo' positions despite being a dissident-newcomer position.

## **Conclusion**

This article set out to advance the Southern sensibilities wave in the sociology of IR by calling for attention to the heterogeneities, positionality struggles and vernacularisations of sociological

hierarchies in periphery IR. By bringing out peripheral heterogeneities, it argued that IR is not only quite different in different places but also quite different *in the same place*. This argument may not seem particularly novel in relation to core IR (e.g. the great debates) but it is worth noting that early waves in the sociology of IR have rarely attributed such heterogeneity, pluralism and debate to periphery IR, which has been analysed mostly as singular data points somewhere on the sameness-difference continuum relative to core IR. The Brazilian case shows the limits of such an approach. There is not one but multiple Brazilian strategies for engaging with core IR, with each school connecting to different parts of the core and distancing itself from others. The Brasília School associating with French ‘History of IR’ but opposing theoricist Northern IR. The PUC school engaging Northern IR theories, but mostly its critical, post-positivist and European varieties and therefore simultaneously opposing Eurocentric mainstream IR. The Paulista school aiming to advance mainstream North American political science methods to supplement, or even replace, critical European approaches.

On peripheral positionality struggles, the article argued for zooming in on the structured rivalry among schools of thought and how such schools are constituted by their position-taking relative to core IR and each other. It focused on the contrapuntal nature of this position-taking whereby strategic stances vis-à-vis core IR—how to engage with core IR and what parts of it—are deployed contrapuntally for positioning vis-à-vis other schools in the peripheral field: the Brasília School’s rejection of theoricist American IR is related to its opposition towards theoretically inclined Brazilian schools as Americanised imitators while its project of advocating nationally rooted foreign policy concepts aims to establish itself as the most indigenous approach. Its declared purpose is to provide policy advice to the Brazilian state’s foreign policy, which is one of the main reasons why critics reject it as parochial, nationalistic and policy-centric. The PUC school’s engagement with critical IR theories from the North is simultaneously used to elevate itself as the most sophisticated theoretical school in Brazil and portray other Brazilian schools as theoretically

backward. Although it does attempt to provincialise Eurocentric IR theories, it engages Northern theory in this project and local critics therefore view it as ‘mainstream’. The Paulista school uses mainstream American positivist IR to make a claim for methodological renewal and oppose the dominant critical approaches as reactionary. Its vision of IR as unified by rational choice, positivism and quantitative methods is rejected by critics as political science colonialism. By bringing out the contrapuntal nature of these position-taking practices, as simultaneously relating to core and peripheral fields, we gain a more sophisticated understanding of the positionality struggles in IR around the world.

Finally, on the vernacularisation of sociological hierarchies, the article argued that seemingly familiar disciplinary positions do travel from core to periphery, but the sociological hierarchies among them do not necessarily travel along. Traveling theories can mean something quite different in different places. The Brazilian case illustrates the vernacularisation of *sociological hierarchies*: a French historiographical school, which is marginal in the core, occupies a prominent position in the Brazilian field and has been transformed into something close to an indigenous school; a school drawing on post-positivism, post-modernism and critical theory is seen as the most ‘mainstream’ position by critics in the Brazilian field; a positivist and quantitative school is in a dissident position. More generally, IR *theory*, which is a key source to prominence in the core, carries less weight than practical, applied and policy-relevant expertise on Brazilian foreign policy. By directing attention to vernacularised hierarchies, for example on the relative prominence of theoretical versus policy, we can better understand why the schools of thought that are most critical of Northern IR do not advance alternative Brazilian *theory*, but rather conceptualisations of Brazilian foreign policy. It furthermore allows us to understand potential alliance patterns, such as that between the Brasília and PUC schools against the Paulista school. In sum, a sociology of IR attuned to these Southern sensibilities results in a much more agential, dynamic and creative view of periphery IR.

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Table 1

**Table 1. Scholars with the greatest influence on the field of IR ‘in your part of the world in the past 20 years.’**

#	Name	Votes	Affiliation	Alma mater
1	Maria Regina Soares de Lima	29	IUPERJ	Vanderbilt University, PhD Political Science
2	Rafael Villa	23	USP	USP, PhD Political Science
3	Tullo Vigevani	22	UNESP	USP, PhD Social History
4	Amado Cervo	20	UnB	University of Strasbourg, PhD History
5	Eduardo Viola	12	UnB	USP, PhD Political Science
6	Letícia Pinheiro	11	PUC Rio	LSE, PhD International Relations
7	Matias Spektor	11	FGV	Oxford, PhD International Relations
8	José Flávio Sombra Saraiva	10	UnB	University of Birmingham, PhD History
9	Monica Herz	9	PUC Rio	LSE, PhD International Relations
10	Héctor Saint-Pierre	8	UNESP	UNICAMP, PhD Philosophy
11	José Luís Fiori	8	UFRJ	USP, PhD Political Science
12	Octavio Amorim Neto	8	FGV	UCSD, PhD in Political Science
13	Paulo Vizentini	8	UFRGS	USP, PhD Economic History
14	Marco Cepik	6	UFRGS	IUPERJ, PhD Political Science
15	Antônio Carlos Lessa	5	UnB	UnB, PhD History
16	Cristina Pecequilo	5	UNIFESP	USP, PhD Political Science

Notes: Respondents were asked to ‘List the four scholars who have had the greatest influence on the field of IR in your part of the world in the past 20 years.’ Each respondent can cast four votes. 130 respondents answered this question and cast a total of 461 votes. Note that the original list included four Argentina-based scholars who have been removed here. Only scholars who receive at least five votes are included. Information on affiliation and alma mater is collected from the Currículo Lattes or personal websites. Data from TRIP survey 2014.

## Endnotes

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